ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ending December 31st, 1904.

HEALTH OFFICE,
BIRKDALE,
31st January, 1905.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BIRKDALE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report as to the health and sanitary condition of your district during the year 1904, together with the usual statistics of the sickness and mortality on Forms 1, 2, 3, 4, as required by the Local Government Board.

Population, 1901	14,197
Birth-rate, per 1000 living	19·6
Death-rate, per 1000 living	13·7
Do. do. Local	12·6
Zymotic Death-rate per 1000 living	0·7
Do. do. including Summer Diarrhœa	1·0
Death-rate of Children under 1 year to 1000 Births	125

Your Health Committee have accomplished a great deal of useful work, calculated to improve the condition of life for all classes. The death-rate is much lower than last year, and the death-rate of children under one year also shows a very satisfactory improvement, but still there are a great number of premature births registered which is no doubt due to carelessness on the mother's part. It would be well could we discover some means of dealing with this increasing evil; otherwise the Infant Mortality is much reduced, owing to frequent supervision and advise. A large number of children die annually from exposure, want of care, and improper feeding; it is difficult to make a lasting impression on mothers of the high value of milk only as a diet. I should like to see a leaflet giving directions for the proper feeding of infants issued by Registrar of Births to each person registering a birth.

There are also fewer deaths of infants recorded from Epidemic Diarrhœa. There can be little doubt that Epidemic or Summer Diarrhœa is a disease of a specific nature just as much as such diseases as Cholera and Enteric Fever are, and it is to be regretted, therefore, that it is not enumerated among the Notifiable Infectious Diseases, or that at least it is not notified by the Registrar to the Medical Officer of Health, so that early attention could be given to the matter and enquiries made into its cause.

Present statistics tell us of the decrease of Phthisis, and there is every reason to believe that with a greater knowledge of proper ventilation and other hygienic measures a much further reduction in the death-rate will follow. I have to report, however, a slight increase in the deaths due to Phthisis. In all known cases we tried to improve any insanitary surroundings, and I think it would be well if the Medical Practitioners of the district were asked to regularly report any cases of Phthisis, by this means we could obtain knowledge of those cases of Consumption in which the services of the Health Department could be of use. I think, also, cards and notices relating to the objectionable habit of spitting should be widely distributed.

Your Board has given a good deal of attention to Sewering and Scavenging of the district, and 52 open Privies have been abolished. The introduction of the Bin system and the abolition of open Privies and Ashpits has added to the better health of the district, as evidenced by the fact that not a single case of Enteric Fever was notified during the year, and the only registered case of Diphtheria was undoubtedly imported.

Scarlet Fever was very prevalent during the year and caused much anxiety, as the accommodation in Swire Road Hospital was not adequate to meet it. This inconvenience is now set at rest, as our new Isolation Hospital is finished and ready for use, and will no doubt prove a big help and enable us more effectually to control the spread of infectious diseases. This Hospital is not of course available for Small-pox patients, and I should therefore urge the immediate necessity of preparing an Isolation Hospital for this disease, as you know the importance of having these cases isolated without delay.

A new Disinfection Apparatus has also been purchased, which will give more satisfactory results, as it is one of the latest of its kind.

I regret to say that Cancer is still an unsolved problem, and has been the cause of seven deaths in the district. So far the present research has not achieved any practical end, but the enquiry is still being continued, and we hope before long some discovery of the cause and treatment will be made.

The small number of deaths registered from Alcoholism and Cirrhosis of Liver, viz. three, point to the gratifying fact that Birkdale is benefitting by the general temperance movement in the country.

Particulars of work carried out at Workshops during the past year.—Additional ventilation has been carried out in connection with eight bake-houses and workshops. Privy Closets were found in connection with ten

workshops and bakehouses. Although the closets were some twenty feet distant, your Inspector and myself insisted on the Privies being abolished and Water-Closets fixed. Four Ashpits in connection with such premises were abolished and Ashbins substituted. The bakehouses were cleaned and in good condition when last visited.

Three hundred Ashbins are now in use at the various residences, and your Board is making every effort to abolish open Ashpits and Privy Closets altogether.

TABLE I.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births.		Deaths under 1 year of age.		Deaths at all ages.		Deaths in Public Institutions.	Deaths of Non-Residents registered in District.	Deaths of Residents registered beyond District.	Deaths at all ages. Nett.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1000 Births regist'r'd.	Number.	Rate.				Number.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1894	12,930	302	23·3	30	99	167	12·9	No Public Institutions.				
1895	13,111	338	25·7	51	150	215	16·3					
1896	13,292	333	25·0	34	102	168	12·6					
1897	13,473	313	23·2	57	182	212	15·7					
1898	13,654	333	24·3	47	141	190	13·9					
1899	13,835	308	22·2	50	162	231	16·6			13	244	17·6
1900	14,016	334	23·8	42	125	215	15·3			14	229	16·3
1901	14,197	319	22·4	46	144	184	12·8			15	199	14·0
1902	15,000	286	19·0	35	122	198	13·2			18	216	14·4
1903	15,000	304	20·2	48	157	214	14·2			19	233	15·5
Averages for years 1894-1903	13,850	317	22·9	44	138	199	14·3			15	224	15·5
1904	15,000	295	19·6	37	125	188	12·5			18	206	13·7

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) 2214

Total Population at all ages.....14,197
Number of Inhabited Houses 2898
Average No. of persons per house ..4·89
At Census of 1901.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

SMALL-POX.

No case was reported during the year. Strict watch was kept over lodging-houses where tramps and other undesirable visitors were likely to carry disease; and I would like to point out again that we have no suitable Hospital for isolating the cases.

SCARLET FEVER

Was again very prevalent, 110 cases were reported, and caused five deaths. Sixty-nine cases were removed to our Isolation Hospital, and the various schools and infected premises were carefully disinfected. In all cases the usual precautions were taken to stay the disease.

WHOOPING COUGH.

A few cases of this disease came under notice and caused three deaths, but did not spread to any great extent.

MEASLES.

This disease was much less prevalent than in the previous year. There were three deaths recorded, but the district is now free of it. Disinfectants are supplied in all cases by the Inspector to persons in whose house there are cases of infectious disease.

TYPHOID.

No notification and no deaths.

DIPHTHERIA.

One case notified, which was imported. No deaths.

DIARRHŒA.

No cases reported. Five deaths recorded from Epidemic or Summer Diarrhœa, which I think, as I have already pointed out, ought to be a notifiable disease.

SCAVENGING AND GENERAL STREET WORK.

During the past year the streets have undergone the usual repairs, have been carefully scavenged, and after the fall of snow have been speedily cleared and the snow carted away.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Sewers are frequently flushed, and the receiving reservoir at the Sewage Works is now cleaned out twice a week. The pumping machinery has also been improved. The irrigation area has received special attention and is ploughed when necessary.

LIGHTING.

The Lighting of the district is satisfactory, all the street lamps being Incandescent ; and in addition all the tram routes are lighted by Electricity. The illuminating power of the gas is examined twice in each month by the Clerk of the Council.

SHIPPONS.

The Shippons of the district are visited and reported on monthly by your Veterinary Inspector, who reports that the cattle are healthy and the Shippons sweet and clean.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The Sanitary Inspector visits the Slaughter Houses frequently and insists upon limewashing and cleaning being attended to when necessary.

PIG-KEEPING.

Considerable attention has been necessary with respect to the keeping of swine, and constant supervision has in most cases been sufficient to cope with the cases under notice. The Council appealed to the Local Government Board with respect to this matter, and have received Draft Clauses from the Board for the amendment of the Council's Bye-Laws, which are now under consideration.

STATISTICS.

The rate of mortality per 1000 is satisfactory, being only 13·7, and 12·6 local. The zymotic death-rate is also low, being 0·7 per 1000. Deaths of Infants under 1 year is 125.

	Births.		Deaths.
Males	164	.....	91
Females	131	.....	115
	295		206

Ages at which death took place :—

Under 1 year	37
1 to 5	13
5 to 15	9
15 to 25	5
25 to 65	85
65 and upwards	57
	206

Your Obedient Servant,

ALBERT V. WHEELER,

Medical Officer of Health.

HEALTH OFFICE, TOWN HALL, BIRKDALE.

February, 1905.

LIST OF NUISANCES ABATED from January 1st, 1904, *to December 31st*, 1904.

NUISANCE ARISING FROM	NO.	REMARKS.
Water closets stopped	7	Cleaned out
Bristol ejects or slop water closets stopped	24	Cleaned out
Drains stopped	20	Cleaned out
Dirty drain traps	4	Cleaned out
Defective drains	5	Modern gullies fixed at dishstones
Dirty water closet basins	1	Cleaned out
Offensive pan water closets	5	Modern wash-down water closets fixed
Offensive wash-out water closets	4	Modern wash-down water closets fixed
Defective soil pipe ventilators	6	4-in. ventilation pipes carried 2 ft. above eaves
Drain ventilation pipes choked up	10	Ventilation pipes cleaned out
Offensive privies	53	Privies abolished and modern w.c.'s fixed
Offensive privies	21	Privies abolished and Bristol ejects or slop w.c.'s fixed
Defective ashpits	23	Ashpit bottoms raised and roofed over
Defective ashpits	26	Ashpits abolished and ashbins adopted
Bakehouses, not satisfactory	8	Limewashed and additional ventilation fixed
Bakehouses, not suitable as such	1	Abolished
Offensive Bristol eject closets	3	Bristol ejects removed & modern w.c.'s fixed
Defective drains not ventilated	8	Intercepted from main sewer and ventilated
Defective rain-water cisterns	2	Abolished
Dirty rain-water cisterns	14	Cleaned out
Defective waste water pipes	8	Undertrapped
Defective roofs of dwellings	1	Roof repaired
Overcrowding bedrooms	7	Numbers reduced
Offensive stable, wood erection	1	Erection removed entirely
Accumulation of stable manure	2	Manure removed from the premises
Town's water turned off at dwelling	6	Town's water turned on again
Total	270	
Smoke observations taken	7	No cause for prosecution

Fifty-eight official notices were served during the year for the abatement of Nuisances. 212 Nuisances abated during the year, on intimation being given to the various owners, on the discovery of the same.

No legal proceedings required to be taken during the year for the abatement of Nuisances. 283 Ashbins are now in use at the same number of dwellings, an increase of 83 during the year. Most of them are emptied twice a week. The emptying of Ashpits has been carried out systematically throughout the district during the year by the District Council's own workmen, the nightsoil and refuse being removed to farm fields outside the district.

A number of dwellings, the addresses of same being kept in a special register, where the drain traps are cleaned out periodically, and disinfected by the District Council workmen at a small cost to the tenants.

The drains in connection with the various Public Elementary Schools within the district are flushed and disinfected during the holiday periods by the District Council's workmen in addition to the ordinary cleaning carried out by the various caretakers on the premises.

Nuisances under notice to abate at the end of year :—

Pigkeeping	17
Insufficient Privy accommodation	12
Insufficient Drainage	1
Overcrowding Bedrooms	2
	32

JAMES JUMP,

Sanitary Inspector.